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Letter dated 13 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan held the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April 2015. I have the honour to transmit herewith an assessment of the work of the Council during that presidency (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Dina **Kawar**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 13 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Jordan (April 2015)

Introduction

During the month of April 2015, under the presidency of Jordan, the Security Council held 14 meetings (12 public meetings and two private meetings) and 14 consultations of the whole. The Council adopted five resolutions and issued 12 press statements and one presidential statement. There was one ministerial-level open debate on "Maintenance of international peace and security: the role of youth in countering violent extremism and promoting peace", chaired by the Crown Prince of Jordan, Al Hussein bin Abdullah II.

Africa

Burundi

On 16 April, the Council held consultations to discuss the situation in Burundi. The Council heard a briefing from the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, who expressed concern over the heightened political tension in the country resulting from the forthcoming elections and speculations over President Nkurunziza running for a third term. He indicated that there were divergent views regarding the president's candidature for a third term. The opposition claimed that it would lead to an outbreak of violence in the country, while the ruling party stated that violence would ensue from his not running. The Assistant Secretary-General expressed concern over the deteriorating security situation and described it as unpredictable.

The Assistant Secretary-General mentioned that the Secretary-General had telephoned President Nkurunziza and met with the Minister of the Interior, stressing on both occasions that the Government and security forces should remain impartial in dealing with the tense situation and provide an environment conducive to holding free, fair, inclusive and transparent elections.

The Assistant Secretary-General informed the Council members that the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi, Cassam Uteem, had met with all stakeholders in Burundi, including the Government, the Independent National Electoral Commission, political parties, youth organizations and civil society representatives. That meeting had concluded with the signing of a non-violence charter on 3 March 2015.

The Assistant Secretary-General alluded to the visit of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, who had held meetings with the stakeholders in Burundi, including a round table during which he had expressed his concern over the political tension, violence, continuing hate speech and the violent activities of the Imbonerakure, and urged the Government and security forces to remain impartial

and create an environment conducive to the holding of elections. The Assistant Secretary-General also quoted the call by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the opposition to exercise self-restraint and not to resort to violence, and to the Government to clamp down on the activities of the Imbonerakure and to disarm them.

Members of the Council expressed their concern over the overall situation in Burundi, and some indicated that the Council should play a preventive role in Burundi before political tensions transformed into violence. Most of the members agreed with the Assistant Secretary-General and the High Commissioner that the Government should curtail the activities of the Imbonerakure and that the Government and security forces should remain impartial, and stressed the need for the Government and the opposition to refrain from violence and to support actively the conditions for a peaceful, timely, credible and inclusive elections process. They welcomed the high-level visits and reiterated the importance of upholding the charter of non-violence and the Arusha Agreement. Several members also stressed to the importance of upholding other elements of the national unity, including the Constitution and the Electoral Code.

On 29 April, the Council held consultations, under "Other matters", to discuss the situation in Burundi, during which it heard a briefing by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit. The Special Envoy informed the Council that he had arrived in Bujumbura on 24 April. He indicated that the announcement by the ruling party that President Nkurunziza would be their presidential candidate for the forthcoming elections had sparked widespread protests in the capital, which had been dispersed with water cannons and tear gas.

The Special Envoy indicated that containing the situation in Burundi should be a priority and that the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy had asked the Constitutional Court to provide a ruling on the constitutionality of a third term by the incumbent President.

The Council expressed their deep concern over the deteriorating situation in Burundi and highlighted the imperative need to safeguard the progress made through the Arusha Agreement. Some members also expressed their concern over the high number of refugees in neighbouring countries, the narrow political space and the restrictions imposed on constitutional freedoms. They urged the Government to fulfil its commitment to holding free, fair, inclusive, credible, peaceful and transparent elections. Several members stated that the elections must be held according to the electoral calendar. They stressed that it was very important for political parties to be allowed to carry out their activities freely and peacefully and urged all players in Burundi to show self-restraint and not to resort to violence. They highlighted that parties in Burundi should engage in dialogue to resolve their differences and that the African Union and regional organizations should play a leading role in engaging dialogue.

Some members invoked the supremacy of national legislation and institutions in determining the eligibility of President Nkurunziza to another term, emphasizing the national ownership of Burundi in that regard, while others pointed out that the current level of violence was a direct result of the President's decision to pursue a third term.

Central African Republic

On 8 April, the Council held a private meeting with the troop- and police-contributing countries of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in the context of the renewal of its mandate.

During a public meeting, on 14 April, the Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSCA, Lieutenant General Babacar Gaye. The Special Representative stated that the people in the Central African Republic remained at risk from attacks by anti-balaka and ex-Séléka, as those continued to wage hostilities during the country's ongoing civil conflict, and that the humanitarian situation remained grave throughout the country. He pointed out, however, that the historic local consultations completed in March had provided civilians in the Central African Republic with an opportunity to express their views on the issues at the heart of the crisis. The Special Representative stated that MINUSCA had managed to diffuse the tension among the transitional authorities by promoting a consensus-based approach. He also stated that MINUSCA was preparing the facilitation of a discussion between the transitional authorities and armed groups before the Bangui Forum. He observed that the country's political transition had reached a critical stage in the organization of credible and inclusive elections that would mark the end of the transitional period, and emphasized that the international community had a moral obligation to help the Central African Republic and its people to remain on the path of peace and reconciliation.

During closed consultations, the Council members took note of the progress achieved in the political transition and of the challenges that remained. They expressed concern about the violent clashes and worsening humanitarian situation and emphasized the importance of the Bangui Forum, long-term reconciliation and the holding of credible, inclusive and timely elections. The Council urged the international community to continue to provide humanitarian assistance and to support the electoral process.

On 28 April, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2217 (2015), by which it extended the mandate of MINUSCA by one year, reinforced the prioritization of the tasks in the MINUSCA mandate and recalled its intention to keep the current troop ceiling under continuous review in a manner that did not prejudice overall efforts to support long-term objectives for peace and stability. Following the adoption of the resolution, the Council heard a statement by the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations, Ambroisine Kpongo, who thanked the Council for the support provided to the Central African people and noted that the renewal of the MINUSCA mandate would allow the Government to finalize the timing of the transition.

Côte d'Ivoire

On 22 April, the Council held consultations of the whole on the sanctions against Côte d'Ivoire. The Permanent Representative of Chile, Cristián Barros Melet, briefed the Council in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1572 (2004) concerning Côte d'Ivoire. The Chair highlighted the main findings contained in the final report of the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire pursuant to paragraph 27 of Security Council resolution

2153 (2014) (S/2015/252) and briefly touched upon the discussions that the Committee had held on the report during a meeting on 10 April.

The Chair pointed out that, in connection with the final report of the Group of Experts and the visit of the Chair of the Committee in November 2014, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire had made progress in the implementation of the arms embargo and in providing relevant information in notifications and exemption requests to the Committee, as well as in informing the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the Group of Experts about the arrival of materiel. The Group of experts had also noted an improvement in the cooperation with the authorities in Côte d'Ivoire.

The Chair indicated that the recommendations contained in the final report were still under consideration by the members of the Committee.

On 28 April, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2219 (2015), in which it renewed until 30 April 2016 the sanctions measures (assets freeze and travel ban) imposed by the Council on individuals and entities and extended until 30 May 2016 the mandate of the Group of Experts set out in paragraph 7 of resolution 1727 (2006).

Liberia

On 2 April, and upon the recommendation of the Secretary-General of 16 March 2015, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2215 (2015), thereby authorizing the resumption of the drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, which has been suspended since September 2014 owing to the Ebola outbreak.

Libya

On 29 April, the Council held closed consultations on Libya and was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Bernardino León. The Special Representative stated that the security situation continued to deteriorate and that chaos was deepening, even though there was steady progress in the political dialogue among the Libyan parties. He explained that he was waiting for their response to the proposal he had presented and indicated that the Council should be ready to respond to the outcomes of the political meetings among the Libyan parties. He recommended that the Council send a strong message to the spoilers of the political process by reiterating its readiness to use sanctions. He explained that terrorist groups, including the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), that exploited the political vacuum in Libya must be taken seriously and stressed the need to counter them.

During the consultations, the Council members agreed on a statement to the press that reflected their common views. In particular, they expressed their support for the Special Representative's efforts and for the political process, welcomed the steady progress in the political dialogue and commended the engagement of the parties. They urged all sides to reach a compromise in the interest of securing a peaceful transition in Libya and reiterated their readiness to use sanctions under resolution 2213 (2015) against those who sought to threaten, undermine or obstruct the transition. They called upon all parties to redouble their efforts to reach an

agreement according to the time frame set out by the Special Representative, noting that there could be no military solution to the crisis in Libya, and urged all parties to seize the chance for peace.

Mali

On 9 April, the Council heard a briefing and held closed consultations on the situation in Mali. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, presented the report of the Secretary-General dated 27 March 2015 on the situation in Mali (S/2015/219), submitted pursuant to resolution 2164 (2014).

The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations focused his briefing on the dialogue process, the fragile security situation in many parts of the country, especially in the north, violations of the ceasefire agreements and the strengthening of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

Regarding the political process, he highlighted that the crisis in Mali could only be resolved through an inclusive and viable political agreement that could be implemented effectively. He mentioned that the draft agreement on peace and reconciliation in Mali, which had been initialled by the representatives of the Government of Mali, one of the coalitions of armed groups (the Platform of movements) and all members of the international mediation team, was a critical first step in a long process, and that it was important for all parties to continue to engage constructively and in good faith in order to sign the agreement and to commit fully to its effective implementation.

He also noted that the head of the mediation process, the representative of Algeria, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of MINUSMA, Mongi Hamdi, had met in Algiers with the leadership of the third party, known as the Coordination, which had indicated its intention to initial the agreement. He emphasized the important role that regional countries and all partners of Mali could play in supporting MINUSMA to enable it to discharge its mandate fully.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali, Abdoulaye Diop, requested that the Council lend its full support to the peace process and exert pressure on the armed groups to sign the draft agreement without preconditions. He also called upon the Council to impose targeted sanctions on those who undermined the peace process.

During the consultations, Council members welcomed the efforts of the international mediation team and urged actors to encourage the armed groups that had not yet signed the draft agreement to do so. They expressed deep concern about the volatile security situation in the north of Mali and the continued attacks, including against MINUSMA, and violent clashes in the country. Some members stressed the need to take into account the legitimate demands of the population of northern Mali and to work towards achieving their legitimate aspirations. Many members noted the importance of continuous support by the international community for Mali and the role of MINUSMA in the implementation of the agreement. Members condemned the terrorist attacks that targeted the Mission's staff and called for the prosecution of the perpetrators.

On 10 April, the Council issued a statement to the press, in which it welcomed the agreement on peace and reconciliation in Mali, initialled by some of the parties

on 1 March, and urged the armed groups of the Coordination to also initial it. The Council commended the role played by Algeria and other members of the international mediation team for their continued efforts and expressed its intention to facilitate and follow closely the implementation of the agreement in coordination with the international mediation team. Finally, the Council reiterated its readiness to consider appropriate measures, including targeted sanctions, against those who resumed hostilities and violated the ceasefire.

Somalia

On 15 April, the Council issued a press statement condemning the attack by Al-Shabaab on 14 April at the Ministry of Higher Education in Mogadishu, which had killed Somali civilians, members of the Somalia National Security Forces and a soldier from the African Union Mission in Somalia, as well as injuring others.

On 20 April, the Council issued a press statement condemning the attack on carried out on the same day against a United Nations vehicle in Garowe, Somalia, for which Al-Shabaab had claimed responsibility, and which had caused numerous deaths and injuries.

Western Sahara

On 16 April, the Council held a private meeting with the troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The Council heard a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, after which it issued a communiqué of the meeting, in accordance with rule 55 of its provisional rules of procedure.

On 22 April, the Council held closed consultations on the situation concerning Western Sahara. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINURSO, Kim Bolduc, informed the Council that the general situation in the area of operations of MINURSO in Western Sahara had remained relatively calm and stable over the past year and that the ceasefire continued to hold. She highlighted that the confidence-building measures were not at the required level and that they had been negatively affected by the suspension of flights since June 2014 organized under the family visits programme for refugees in the camps near Tindouf and their families west of the berm.

She mentioned that the mission continued to maintain good relations with Morocco and the Frente Polisario, and that she was working on the basis of the principle of neutrality.

The Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, briefed the Council on his recent visits to the region and the latest developments related to the shuttle diplomacy that he was currently undertaking to achieve a mutually acceptable political solution to the situation in Western Sahara.

He stressed his commitment to the guidance of the Council and its relevant resolutions and, in that regard, announced his intention to continue with the shuttle diplomacy and to visit the region in order to support the negotiating process.

Council members welcomed the assumption of functions by the Special Representative as Head of the Mission and the return of the Personal Envoy to the

region, and indicated their support for the political process led by the United Nations and the approach currently followed by the Personal Envoy in his good offices role. They also stressed the importance of reaching a mutually acceptable political solution compliant with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

On 28 April, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2218 (2015), by which it extended the mandate of MINURSO until 30 April 2016.

Asia

Middle East

Lebanon

On 28 April, the Council held consultations on Lebanon and was briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004), Terje Roed-Larsen, on the twenty-first semi-annual report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) (S/2015/258). The Special Envoy raised the subject of the presidential vacuum and explained that there seemed to be little prospect for the election of a president in the near future. He added that the prolonged vacuum presented problems for those governing the country and put further pressure on the State's institutions. He encouraged the Council to call upon the Lebanese politicians to elect a president without delay. He mentioned the impact of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic on the security and stability of Lebanon and called for additional international support to the Lebanese army. He welcomed Prime Minister Salam's continued commitment to disassociating Lebanon from regional conflicts. He added that it was essential that the international community continue to support Lebanon in upholding and ensuring respect for that principle by all parties. He called for assistance to Lebanon in carrying the burden of refugees and encouraged the Council to consider undertaking an official visit to that country.

Members expressed their support for the security and the stability of Lebanon amid the regional challenge facing the country, in particular the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. They called for the election of a president to be held as soon as possible and commended the efforts of the Prime Minister and his Government. Most members stressed the importance of the dissociation policy. Members called for increased international support to the armed forces and Government of Lebanon with regard to the burden of hosting increasing numbers of Syrian refugees.

Syrian Arab Republic

On 2 April, the Council held consultations on the Syrian Arab Republic and was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Angela Kane, who noted the progress made so far in the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons production facilities in the Syrian Arab Republic. The High Representative informed the Council of the latest visits to the Syrian Arab Republic by the Declaration Assessment Team of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which had been carried out to address the outstanding issues and further consult with the Syrian authorities. She also drew attention to the preparations for the deployment of the fact-finding mission tasked

with looking into allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in that country.

During the consultations, Council members welcomed the progress achieved so far in the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons production facilities. Several members highlighted the need to resolve the outstanding questions regarding the Initial Declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic and all discrepancies. Several members expressed their concerns stemming from reports and media and open sources about the use of chlorine as a weapon in Idlib and Sarmeen, especially after the adoption of resolution 2209 (2015), in which the Security Council had stressed that those individuals responsible for any use of chemicals as weapons must be held accountable. Council members condemned the use of chlorine as a chemical weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic and called for an investigation of all reports and allegations.

On 6 April, the Council held consultations on the situation in the Yarmouk refugee camp. It was briefed by videoconference by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Pierre Krähenbühl, who was greatly alarmed by the dangerous humanitarian situation in the Yarmouk refugee camp and expressed his deep concern about the safety of the Palestinian and Syrian civilians who lived there. He mentioned the intense fighting among armed groups in the camp, which had exacerbated trauma and fear among civilians. He suggested that the Council issue a presidential statement calling upon all parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, ensure the protection of the civilians trapped in the camp and put an end to the fighting in order to enable UNRWA staff to support and assist civilians. He also suggested that the Council members visit the camp.

During the consultations, the members expressed their deep concern about the grave situation in the Yarmouk refugee camp. They condemned in the strongest terms the grave crimes committed by ISIL and al-Nusrah Front against civilians in the camp and emphasized that such crimes should not go unpunished. They called for the protection of civilians in the camp, access to be given to humanitarian actors, the provision of assistance and the safe passage and evacuation of civilians. Moreover, the members welcomed the efforts by UNRWA and stressed the need to support them. They reminded all parties of their obligations to work towards the safety, security and protection of civilians in the camp and called upon them to immediately implement all relevant Security Council resolutions, in compliance with international humanitarian law. Several members also recalled resolution 2139 (2014), in which the Council had called upon all parties to immediately lift the sieges of populated areas.

On 20 April, the Council held closed consultations on the situation in the Yarmouk refugee camp and was briefed by videoconference by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA and the Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Syrian Arab Republic, Ramzy Ezzeldin Ramzy.

The Commissioner-General informed the Council of the deterioration of the humanitarian situation inside the camp and of the lack of security, food and medicine. He also mentioned his contact with the Syrian authorities and called upon the international community to increase political and financial support to UNRWA. The Deputy Special Envoy related the intense fighting in the camp among the different armed groups.

During the consultations, the members agreed on issuing a statement to the press in which they expressed their deep concern about the grave humanitarian situation in the camp and called for unhindered humanitarian access to the camp and for the protection of its civilian population. They welcomed the efforts by UNRWA and the Deputy Special Envoy and stressed the need to provide support to UNRWA. They also underscored their support for United Nations efforts to assist Palestinian refugees trapped in the camp. They called upon all parties to support the United Nations framework and to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, international human rights and refugee laws, and demanded that all parties cease all attacks against civilians, including shelling and aerial bombardment. They condemned all acts of terrorism perpetrated and demanded that ISIL, al-Nusrah Front and groups designated by the Council as terrorist organizations immediately withdraw from the camp.

On 24 April 2015, the Council heard a briefing on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and Expatriates Affairs of Jordan, Nasser Judeh. The Council members were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, the Special Envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Angelina Jolie-Pitt, and the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Ertharin Cousin. The Permanent Representatives of Lebanon and Turkey also participated in the meeting.

The Emergency Relief Coordinator described the impact of violence on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. She appealed to the Council to demand that attacks on education and health facilities cease and that schools and hospitals become zones of peace, mandate a fact-finding mission to look specifically at the situation in besieged communities, mandate the negotiation of humanitarian pauses and days of tranquility, send perpetrators a clear message that their crimes would not go unpunished and enforce an arms embargo and targeted sanctions for violations of international humanitarian law and non-respect for humanitarian imperatives.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees explained that the regional spillover effects of the Syrian conflict were taking on dramatic proportions. He called for the provision of more humanitarian aid to refugees and host communities, a massive increase in support for the neighbours of the Syrian Arab Republic and a review of the development funding policies of the international community. He also stressed the need to recognize the protracted nature of the refugee crisis. In her briefing, the Special Envoy called upon the Council to act in the Syrian Arab Republic and to visit the Syrian refugees themselves. She asked Member States to help the refugees and provide legal avenues to safety if they were unable to stop the conflict. She also spoke of the issue of accountability in relation to the systemic sexual violence and asked for Syrian women to have the ability to take part in future peace negotiations to end the conflict.

The Executive Director of the World Food Programme outlined a decline in food security and the weakening of water and health services in the country. She emphasized the importance of nutritional services and educational systems in providing stability during the conflict. She urged the Council to find a political solution and implement humanitarian solutions to ensure stability across the region.

Council members expressed their concern about the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and its regional impact, as well as their appreciation of the efforts of the Governments of the neighbouring countries that hosted Syrian refugees. They called for increased international support to be provided to those Governments and reaffirmed that the only sustainable solution to the current crisis was through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process that met the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, with a view to fully implementing the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012.

In a presidential statement adopted at the meeting (S/PRST/2015/10), the Council noted with deep concern that the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic had had social, demographic, environmental and economic effects on neighbouring countries and called for coordinated international support to those hosting Syrian refugees, at their request, in addressing legitimate security concerns and ensuring the safety and security of host communities and refugees, and countering radicalization. It stressed the importance of funding the humanitarian and development responses to the refugee crisis. It urged all Member States, based on burden-sharing principles, to support the United Nations and the countries of the region, and urged donors, international financial institutions and United Nations agencies to consider financing instruments that effectively met the unique needs of middle-income countries impacted by the Syrian conflict.

On 24 April, the Council held consultations on the Syrian Arab Republic and was briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Syrian Arab Republic, Staffan de Mistura, on his efforts to facilitate a political solution to the conflict. He spoke of the unmeasurable suffering of the Syrian people, which required a renewed attempt to refocus negotiations to overcome differences and to narrow the gap towards achieving a political solution based on the Geneva communiqué, which was the framework that had enjoyed international consensus and support. He informed the Council members that he would hold structured consultative and separate meetings in Geneva with the Syrian parties, representatives of the Syrian civil society, and regional and international actors. He indicated that he would provide his assessment to the Secretary-General and would keep the Council informed.

During the consultations, Council members expressed their support for the efforts of the Special Envoy and reiterated their support for the political solution based on the Geneva communiqué, including the plan of the Special Envoy to hold consultative separate meetings with the Syrian parties. They called upon the Syrian parties to participate effectively and asked that the Special Envoy brief them after his consultations in Geneva.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 21 April, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and Expatriates Affairs of Jordan chaired the open quarterly debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The Council was briefed by the Secretary-General, who said that the international community must do more to promote a return to negotiations that would end nearly half a century of occupation and allow two States, Israel and Palestine to live side by side in security and peace. He added that the parties themselves must demonstrate the commitment and courage necessary to chart a viable course towards a better future. He expressed his concerns

about the receding prospects of the two-State solution and urged the new Israeli Government to reaffirm the commitment of Israel to that solution and to freeze the settlement activity. The Secretary-General also expressed his concern about different aspects of the situation in Gaza and the clashes between the Israeli security forces and Palestinians in the West Bank.

Council members stressed the importance of the two-State solution. They welcomed the agreement reached between the Palestinians and Israelis on the transfer of Palestinian clearance revenues. Several members called for a variety of actions on the part of the Council, including through a resolution, to move negotiated progress forward. Council members called for an end to settlement activities in the West Bank. They also called for the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza to be addressed and for an increase in support to UNRWA. Several members referred to the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, stressing the importance of a political solution to the crisis in that country.

On 28 April, under "Other matters", the Council was briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs ad interim, Jens Anders Toyberg-Frandzen, on the report of the United Nations Board of Inquiry into certain incidents that had occurred in the Gaza Strip between 8 July and 26 August 2014. The Assistant Secretary-General stated that the Secretary-General had formed an ad hoc group of senior managers consisting of Under-Secretaries-General for Political Affairs, Legal Affairs and Safety and Security to review the recommendations of the Board and advise on what course of action he should take. The Council members condemned the incidents, welcomed the Secretary-General's commitment to follow up on the Board's recommendations and called for accountability to be ensured.

Yemen

On 4 April, upon request from a Member State, the Council held urgent consultations to reach a consensus solution to the humanitarian situation in Yemen. The Council members expressed concern over the humanitarian crisis and highlighted that the solution to the Yemeni crisis would be achieved through political dialogue. Member States demanded a cessation of violence. The Council members stressed the importance of facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance through international organizations. Some expressed their views on the causes of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Yemen. During the consultations, a Member State presented a draft resolution that called for the establishment of regular and obligatory humanitarian pauses.

On 14 April, the Council adopted resolution 2216 (2015) by 14 votes in favour, none against and one abstention. Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council demanded that all Yemeni parties, in particular the Houthis, fully implement resolution 2201 (2015) and refrain from further unilateral actions that could undermine the political transition in Yemen, and further demanded, inter alia, that the Houthis immediately and unconditionally end the use of violence and withdraw their forces from all areas that they had seized, including the capital Sana'a. The Council also called upon all Yemeni parties to resume and accelerate inclusive negotiations brokered by the United Nations.

With resolution 2216 (2015), the Council extended the application of the assets freeze and travel ban imposed in resolution 2140 (2014) to two additional individuals, Abdulmalik al-Houthi and Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh. It established an

arms embargo applicable to the individuals and entities designated by the Committee established pursuant to paragraph 19 of resolution 2140 (2014), as well as to the two individuals mentioned above. Moreover, the Council urged all parties to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as rapid, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to reach people in need of humanitarian assistance, including medical assistance. It requested that the Secretary-General intensify his good offices role in order to enable a resumption of a peaceful, inclusive, orderly and Yemeni-led political transition process.

Member States condemned the escalation of violence in Yemen and agreed that a political solution and a consensus agreement must be reached. Several members welcomed the adoption of the resolution and considered its adoption a clear signal of the importance of resuming the political process. Several Member States also noted the necessity of a humanitarian pause in violence to address the dire humanitarian situation.

On 27 April, members of the Council heard the last briefing by the former Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Yemen, Jamal Benomar. The former Special Adviser reported on the implementation of resolutions 2201 (2015) and 2216 (2015), in particular its paragraph 1, in which the Council had demanded that all Yemeni parties, in particular the Houthis, fully implement resolution 2201 (2015), refrain from further unilateral actions that could undermine the political transition in Yemen, and had further demanded, inter alia, that the Houthis immediately and unconditionally end the use of violence and withdraw their forces from all areas that they had seized, including the capital Sana'a. The former Special Adviser told the Council members that the demands made in resolution 2216 (2015) had not been met.

In addition, the former Special Adviser spoke of the grave security and humanitarian situation in Yemen and added that the fighting still continued. He explained that the first beneficiary of that situation was terrorism, reiterated that the only way to solve the Yemeni crisis was through the resumption of negotiations brokered by the United Nations that would lead to power being shared between the political parties in Yemen, and called for an end to violence. He mentioned the efforts that had been made and what his successor may do to enable a resumption of the political transition.

The Council members recalled resolution 2216 (2015), in particular paragraph 13, in which it had requested the Secretary-General to intensify his good offices role in order to enable a resumption of a peaceful, inclusive, orderly and Yemeni-led political transition process, as set out in the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, and paragraph 5 in which it had called for an end to violence. Several members reiterated the importance of the full implementation of the Security Council resolutions on Yemen, in particular resolutions 2201 (2015), 2204 (2015) and 2216 (2015). Moreover, the Council members expressed their concern over the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. They stressed the importance of facilitating evacuation operations and the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as rapid, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to reach people in need of humanitarian assistance, including medical assistance.

Thematic debates and other issues

Maintenance of international peace and security: the role of youth in countering violent extremism and promoting peace

On 23 April, the Council held an open debate on "The role of youth in countering violent extremism and promoting peace", presided over by the Crown Prince of Jordan. The Secretary-General emphasized that the role of youth lay at the heart of international peace and security and that violent extremists deliberately targeted youth. He called for a more active role for youth in peace and security issues and announced that he was developing a comprehensive plan of action to prevent violent extremism, which would seek to engage and empower youth.

More than 65 participants highlighted that youth must be at the heart of efforts to counter violent extremism and promote global peace and security. They reflected on the "push and pull" factors that were conducive to violence, particularly the radicalization of youth and extremism. Various factors were mentioned during the interventions, such as unemployment and underemployment, poverty, socioeconomic challenges, the sense of alienation and exclusion, and illiteracy. The speakers emphasized the important role of international and regional organizations, the private sector and government policies in addressing the increased appeal that extremist ideologies held among youths. Most participants stressed the need to empower youths and youth-oriented organizations in order to respond to violence and the increasing recruitment of youth by terrorist groups. Furthermore, the participants highlighted the increased use of the Internet and social media by terrorist groups to recruit young people worldwide.

Women and peace and security: sexual violence in armed conflict

On 15 April, the Council held an open debate on Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict under the item entitled "Women peace and security". The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, participated in the meeting and noted that, in 2014, the number of victims of sexual violence had dramatically risen, specifically within the context of violent extremism as conflicts throughout the Middle East, North Africa and elsewhere continued to spread and the rate of displacement intensified. She spoke of the use of sexual violence by non-State armed groups, such as ISIL and Boko Haram, as a strategic tactic of war and not as a simple product of conflict. She asked the Member States to turn their commitments to fighting sexual violence in armed conflict into actions. Council members discussed the need for strengthening peacekeeping operations by integrating gender-specific training, better incorporating the women, peace and security agenda into the Council's thematic work and recognizing all perpetrators of sexual violence, including State actors. Many members supported the conclusion of the Special Representative's that conflict-related sexual violence intensified in situations where systemic gender-based discrimination already existed. Furthermore, as a primary reason for displacement, such sexual violence created a vicious cycle of vulnerability for women in conflict settings.